

Human Events

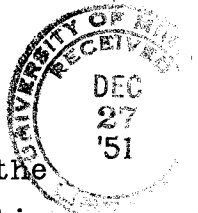
Combined with the Magazine ANALYSIS

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GOD AND SINNER RECONCILED

By George Morgenstern



In an age marked as few others by the arrogance of authority, the manger still welcomes. The inn, as always, is well filled. Reservations were made long in advance. The manger is for the wayfarer and the stray. The great and powerful, as they conceive themselves, are within the inn, and their hour is now. It sometimes seems a long one. But away from the lights and the vainglorious talk, perhaps a place can be made for the meek and the humble, so that they are not altogether turned away.

That is well, for most of us are indeed meek and humble. We have been rendered so by those inside the inn. But in the manger we shall find a lesson in humility. We shall find that it is already tenanted -- and now we learn by Whom. And we shall learn that those within the inn, the powerful ones who afflict us and vex the world, are not eternal.

It is not Herod or Pontius Pilate who has prevailed throughout time. Nor will it be any State of which we know. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." We do not think that Stalin is meek, or Mao Tse-tung, or Truman, or Churchill. We do not conceive of Soviet imperialism, or the Atlantic pact, or the United Nations as the fit instruments of ultimate triumph, any more than we do of Communism or the New Deal. To each of these there may attach some of the power and glory of the given moment, but theirs is not the kingdom forever.

II

This is no attempt to drag politics into the Christmas story: the politicians, and a certain proportion of the clergy, have long since done that. They are given to defining such concepts as Good, or Salvation or Christianity in terms of political and economic systems. The great impiety of the day is the persistent attempt to interpose the State between God and man. We are told that we cannot find our way to the light save through its intercession.

The Kremlin does it one way, and keeps a church for what help it can render. The Communists behind the Iron Curtain have termed Christmas expendable and have said that Stalin's birthday, December 21, shall serve

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as the major holiday of the month. In those lands the people are taught to pray to "our father who art in Moscow".

There is no need to labor the fact of blasphemy, but its purpose should be understood. That is to deify the State, or, more properly, the man who is at the head of the State. But need we go very far afield to find that this spurious identification of the State with God's purpose is the ordinary practice?

Can you recall the name of the leader of any Christian nation who did not send his people into war in God's name? Can you recall any President of recent memory who was not accustomed to concluding a campaign speech, composed largely of misrepresentations, with the promise that "under God" he and his party were going forward to the realization of the inanities of his choice? It is not so long ago that a President, in the midst of war, wound up his campaign with a prayer of his own composition, thus conferring upon himself a status that would hardly be inferior to that of High Priest. The grave of this man is now popularly regarded as a "shrine".

And the clergy, what of them? Americans will remember a pronouncement that came from one of the most powerful of the church organizations, condemning in equal measure Communism and what was termed "laissez-faire Capitalism". Any other kind of Capitalism being necessarily conditioned by State interposition, this was therefore another intended contribution to the aggrandizement of State power.

It is not unusual to read of a type of bishop making common cause with labor bosses, for the apparent promotion of a partisan purpose promising mutual monetary advantages. Nor are the churchgoers of America unfamiliar with the fact that the pulpit and church organizations, particularly of the "social action" variety, have not infrequently become the means of unloading political and economic predilections upon captive audiences as religious imperatives, the purpose again being to contribute to the glorification and power of the State.

These practices and attitudes are a long way from Bethlehem, but to recount them is not to assume the responsibility for having strayed.

It may be said by all alike -- by Stalin, who did have the introduction to a seminary education, as well as by political leaders and by religious politicians -- that each has the justification that he is striving for the perfect order, and that the State is the instrument by which the just society must be achieved. But man does not achieve his measure through the offices of the State. Nor is "society" an excuse which justifies the denial of man as an individual, standing in a particular

relationship to, and possessing a particular worth in the eyes of, God. This doctrine of social justification for the suppression of the individual spirit is a lopsided exercise in rendering unto Caesar.

III

Nor does such a dogma take account of the fact that Christianity, though a system promising ultimate perfection of the spirit, yet rests upon imperfection and incompleteness, and that in thus aligning itself with the nature and the normal development of man it attains its universal appeal and application to humankind. If perfection achieved in condition and in time had been the highest ideal and most cherished value, certainly the Nativity would not have taken place in the manger, but in the inn; and probably not at all in an age when an uncouth soldiery, a vacillating governor, a king by favor and a crowd aroused by appeals to prejudice should have striven to nullify the ministry of Jesus.

But it was the mission as well as the lot of Jesus to reflect in his pilgrimage the very hazards and heartaches to which all other men are subject in life. Certainly the State and society were no friends, for they had an active agency in His death. That death had to be as mean as any reserved for a contemporary victim in the police prisons or in the wars sanctified by States. If the Prince of Peace was crowned, it was with thorns. If He was elevated above other men on this earth, it was as a felon upon a cross.

Was the State His protector, when its agent washed his hands? Was society His benefactor when among its members the voice that prevailed called for His destruction, and when His lot, in His final, pitiful isolation, was to be rewarded with mockery? After all, society is people. Jesus chose His circle of those to be trusted, and even there He found denial and betrayal.

So in this Life the Christian finds an image of the world as it was and as it is. For all, there must be suffering, and no one, save One alone, can soften it. Doubtless the apostles of the all-merciful and all-provident State would have it otherwise. Doubtless some spokesman for the Welfare State would have Mary and Joseph represent the one-third of the population that is ill-housed, ill-clothed and ill-fed.

Perhaps we should have farm subsidies so that there are food coupons for the deserving poor and hot lunches for the infants. Charity is now a virtue reserved for the State. Perhaps state medicine would improve the Nativity. The Star is radiant, but are there not more votes in a public power project? And should not we erect a society where no one meets life in a manger, but everyone in a public housing project?

One wonders what sort of security could have enticed Jesus. In an earthly existence destined to uncertainty, suffering and a death of unrelieved agony, how would a few sops of comfort wrung by the State from His fellows have weighed in the balance against the everlasting triumph? The cradle to the grave is a proper span for men who think in terms of a period in office. But it is a little time for anyone who subscribes to the idea that "the last end of all man and of all his deeds and desires is to know the first truth, namely God".

IV

So Jesus ignored the devices and blandishments of politicians because His kingdom was not of this earth. He did not speak for the State or offer the inducements that the State can offer. His demands were not of the kind that exacts any payment from the individual, except as the individual exacts them from himself. Faith, hope and charity -- these depend on love. Love is a gift of grace, and grace is an act of God.

Therefore the hope of men is, under example, in the improvement of individual personality. It might be argued that this improvement lies in individual conduct. But conduct is something that the policeman -- or the State -- may see to. It can be voluntary, but, equally, it can be forced. The example of which we are reminded at Christmas is one that is wholly voluntary. The Son of God did not sacrifice Himself for mankind because He had no option: His option, even when Pilate left Him an escape hatch, was to sacrifice Himself.

So, if we believe in the teaching of the perfectibility of man, what we offer to God and to our fellows must be a voluntary offering. In this the State stands in our way. It interposes itself between God and ourselves. If we must render unto Caesar, let us do so in the understanding that we may, in conscience, do the rendering grudgingly, for no ultimate value is concerned.

The claims of society are great. They command obedience to the laws. The claims of the State are great. The State maintains the penitentiaries. The claims of God are something else, and they are greater than the others, for they entail no coercion. Their command is profound, for it is entirely voluntary. It demands a subscription of the will. This can be achieved easily, for Christmas proclaims the faith that the great can be known in the small, and God in a child.

We are individuals in a lonely crowd, but Bethlehem assures us that man need never be submerged by mass. If a little Child was capable of leading them, men should not be afraid to walk. They need no State as guide, chaperon, or jailer. Their unity is through the One.

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By Frank C. Hanighen

December 19, 1951

NEW DEFENSE PLAN: The official wind machines can no longer drown out the voices that have been saying that the Eisenhower Army is doing badly. Democratic Congressmen are now arriving in New York from European trips saying that the NATO army will collapse if Ike returns to this country. The General's rising tones of wrath and desk pounding, when he talks to European politicians, show that he has about reached the end of his patience.

Finally, we learn from authoritative sources the following grim fact: the NATO forces today (December 15 figures) are smaller than those of December 15, 1950, if the American divisions landed within recent months are not counted.

It was against this background of reality that General Omar Bradley felt constrained to take a most extraordinary step last week. He found it necessary to present to the National Security Council an alternate plan for the defense of Europe, to be used in case NATO crumbles completely. The plan calls for the defense of Europe to be based on the Mediterranean, specifically on Turkey, North Africa and Spain. Air bases and staging points deep in the Sahara are listed. Expenditure of considerable sums of money in Spain was one of the requirements of the Plan.

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THE CRISIS OF EISENHOWER: These days are difficult for the General in Paris, and it is not surprising that conflicting rumors about his intentions make the dispatches from Europe confusing.

We have received a word picture of Ike as he talked (in the last week) to a visiting group of members of Congress, most of whom are Democrats. Yes, they left feeling that Ike intended to run for the GOP nomination.

But what startled all members of the group was a long harangue from the General attacking what he called the "Pentagon bureaucracy" whom he seemed to blame for the slowness of European rearmament. When one Democrat protested that, after all, the Pentagon had gotten generous appropriations for the European army, Eisenhower went into another flood of invective.

Yes, that was true, unfortunately true -- he said. To the amazement of the group, he went on to say the trouble was that the Pentagon bureaucrats had padded these requests, that he (the General) did not at this stage need all this money, that he couldn't spend it, etc. And he proceeded to castigate "spenders", "padders" and "extravagant bureaucrats".

The group left bewildered. Indeed, the situation of Eisenhower seems to be approaching a crisis. The fact is that what Ike is saying, publicly and privately, has produced a situation which badly impairs the efforts of his mission.

European statesmen have privately disclosed to visiting Americans that they do not know how to interpret Ike's remarks. They say they don't know whether he is addressing them, or addressing the voters in America; whether he is thinking along lines of a commander of an army, or of a candidate for the Presidency.

Some of these European statesmen agree that, from the standpoint of the peoples of Western Europe, it would be almost fatal if Ike resigned and returned to the U. S. On the other hand, from their own standpoint -- they say -- it would be much better if they did not have to deal with this confusing Eisenhower; they would infinitely prefer to deal with, say General Gruenther or General Norstad, with a European commander who was purely and simply a military man.

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This, in short, is the situation behind the news stories that Churchill has persuaded Ike to renounce political ambitions until his military missions are accomplished. It is a situation which many think cannot go on much longer.

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THE ACCIDENT OF INTEGRITY: The nimble minds of the Presidential entourage have projected a new commission, described as a "broom" to sweep out governmental corruption. As we go to press, it seems that Judge Thomas F. Murphy will head the new body, although official confirmation is lacking. Murphy was the Government prosecutor who in 1949-50 put Alger Hiss behind bars. Will Murphy prove a real "broom"? We offer the following little-known story about Murphy.

Some friends remember him as a huge hulk of a man when, years ago, he represented insurance companies in fighting "shake-down" suits in the malodorous atmosphere of Foley Square. When the Hiss case came up on the docket, he was a humble, "lower-drawer" member of the District Attorney's staff. That's why -- it was being said -- the Democratic Administration chose him for the difficult task of prosecuting Hiss. Just out of bed after an operation, the new Prosecutor started hesitantly, lamely. Cynical ones nodded, "Uh-huh!"

But then came a change. Murphy took the offensive and pushed the opposing defense counsel around the ring. What had happened?

Ben Stolberg, the writer, who saw Murphy often during those days and nights told us the story: How Murphy, untutored in the field of chasing subversives, rubbed his eyes when he got to know his star witness, Whittaker Chambers. Why was it that this sloppy bohemian, this former traitor to his country, this individual who had dragged himself through the muck of American life -- how could he, defying all considerations of personal security and advancement, come clean and take a severe beating for no reason but the education of the country? It did not fit into experiences acquired in Foley Square. If Chambers was a "stoolie", he was the most extraordinary one Murphy had encountered in the area of Tombs prison. He was willing to sacrifice himself in face of all the arrayed Big Interests, to tell all; and with no reward, but only public obloquy. Our late friend Stolberg coined a phrase to explain it to Murphy -- "the accident of integrity".

Hence, fascinated by and inspired by the example of Whittaker Chambers, Murphy rolled up his sleeves and performed one of the great jobs of our time as Prosecutor.

Today cynics cackle about Murphy's ambition. But, if he does become the "broom", there's a good chance that he will not have forgotten the above episode and that the Administration, to its dismay, may find him "an accident of integrity".

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WITNESS: The inside story of the famous Alger Hiss case will soon be published. We can exclusively report that the long-awaited manuscript by Whittaker Chambers is now completed and Random House will publish it in the near future. The title of the book will be Witness. Also -- and of equal importance -- we learn that the volume has been selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club for one of its coming monthly choices, date yet to be announced.

The fact that this powerful book club is sponsoring Witness virtually ensures that it will be on the best-seller list and should make it more difficult for the left-wing reviewer clique to do a "hatchet" job. Finally, this selection suggests that Mr. Harry Scherman, President of the book club, believes the public interest in the subversives-in-Government problem will continue to mount for some time to come. In the past, Scherman has made some pretty good guesses.

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MCCARTHYISM: It is rumored that the Senator from Wisconsin, in a book he is preparing for early publication, will have a "score board". This will record the names of persons in the Government whom he originally named in his campaign a year and a half ago and who subsequently have either been expelled from the Department of State or have resigned under investigation. We gather that, up to last week, he claimed ten such cases. Since last week, he will be able to add another, John S. Service, about whom the Government's Loyalty Appeal Board announced a "reasonable doubt" about his loyalty. The State Department had no other option than to discharge Service. McCarthy named Service in the early spring of 1950 and State Department Loyalty Boards cleared him a half dozen times.

The decision on Service has badly jolted what passes for opinion in this Government-dominated town, on the subject of "McCarthyism". We note that our esteemed contemporary John O'Donnell of the New York Daily News has commented (December 18) on the effect of this decision on "the New Deal-Fair Deal pinkos of press and radio who ganged up some months back to destroy the public reputation" of Senator McCarthy. O'Donnell recalls -- and we can corroborate -- that "originally, they figured it would be a smart idea if each one of them used the word 'McCarthyism' to denote a coarse and violent attack on foes of the nation on Capitol Hill. They worked on it in unison and persistently." Indeed, they did. Not without a slight touch of bigotry in their diction, they put on a great show of anti-McCarthyism before Fair Deal functionaries in the obvious hope of obtaining news on quite unrelated subjects. "Now", says O'Donnell, "the whole conspiracy goes apart at the seams."

This is true. Yet the Senator probably takes more satisfaction from the effect on his own bailiwick of the discharge of Service. There, we gather, the news has sent him to a new crest of popularity. During the past week, a testimonial dinner, at \$25.00 a plate, was held for him in Milwaukee. About 2,000 attended. Our correspondent in Wisconsin tells us that those attending were "little people", some of whom had traveled hundreds of miles from backwoods areas of the state. They gladly paid \$25.00 to see the Senator and cheer him. What was noticeable was that these individuals -- many of German or Scandinavian descent -- knew little in detail of the cases he brought up, etc., etc., but did feel strongly that their Senator had been courageous and had been persecuted by the Administration and the press.

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REALISTIC MONEY: What will you give -- on ten o'clock next March 16 -- for a pound sterling? The answer is, of course, you don't know. If you need the pound sterling very much, because you have to pay for something British, you will bid liberally for it, and if there are a lot of pounds being offered, you will bid less. That's the way the market works, with pounds sterling as with cheese.

Nobody can predict with accuracy what anything will be worth at any time, because nobody can add up all the values in all the people's minds -- and all values are in people's minds. Hence, when a government fixes the value of its money, it is trying the impossible. In due time it must realize this. Despite its edicts, some people want the money more, some less, and the prices are fixed accordingly. There's no way of preventing that. When the government is forced by the market to show some sense, it either re-evaluates its money to the level set by the market, which immediately upsets its calculations by the bid-and-ask method; or it gives up on the attempt altogether.

Last week the British Government showed some sense, but not much. It did not cancel its edict that a pound must be worth \$2.80 (you can buy all the pounds you want for less at an American bank), but it will allow British and foreign businessmen, (quoting from a dispatch to the Wall Street Journal), "to negotiate to a limited extent over what the pound actually is worth". Well, whatever anything is actually worth is decided by negotiations always -- and the British Government has had to acknowledge what has been going on, edict or no.

Book Events

A Partisan History of Judaism, by Elmer Berger. New York: Devin-Adair Company.
\$3.00. Reviewed by Frank Chodorov.

To the American of Jewish extraction, who is steeped in the American tradition, the dualism that is thrust upon him is always an enigma. The social disabilities that result from it are painful enough, but what puzzles him is the separateness he is made to feel even though he senses no inner compulsion to separateness. He knows he is an American; yet, the idea that he belongs to a "people apart" is driven in on him not so much by his Christian contemporaries, but by a strident group of Jews with whom he has no sympathy. Religion plays no part in this urge towards segregation, for the diversity of religions among his fellow Americans does not result in their being similarly separated; the Jew is compelled to experience a consciousness of separation even if he has no interest in religion.

To the civilized Christian this peculiar particularism is equally puzzling. He finds in Jews of his own acquaintance nothing that sets them apart from other Americans; they have the same qualities, the same frailties. But, he also notices that in the aggregate the Jews of America are enveloped in an air of separatism, an indefinable something that challenges understanding. As individuals they present no problem to him; as a group he finds them a puzzle.

Presently complicating this conundrum of dualism is the furor about Jewish nationalism. To most American Jews the whole thing is senseless. Their interest in Israel is at best humanitarian: the new country is merely a haven for European Jews left destitute by the war. That attitude is shared by many Christians. But, there comes the harsh, vibrant voice of a solidly organized group insisting that all Jews owe their first allegiance to this new nationalistic entity, going so far as to denounce those Jews who look upon Israel as they do upon Ireland, England or France -- as a foreign nation. Despite his natural allegiance to this country, the sense of dualism is forced on the American Jew. It is more than a hyphen he bears.

Rabbi Elmer Berger has taken hold of the problem and comes up with a solution that is adequate, even if not complete. In his unfortunately named book, A Partisan History of Judaism, he traces this spirit of segregation to its beginnings in pre-Dispersion times, and finds its cause in the belligerent self-interest of the "professional Jew". In the beginning it was the priestly caste, the Sadducees, who fostered the fiction of separateness, surrounding it with legalisms and rituals, all to their own advantage. It was they who resisted the Prophets, with their message of universalism, with their preachment that to be a Jew one needs only "to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly". That would do away with the priestly technician, and they would have none of it.

In the Middle Ages, the professional Jew prospered by the institution of the Ghetto. Mr. Berger points out that this form of separatism was sometimes asked for by these political opportunists, that when enlightened princes offered Jews social and political equality, they found these "leaders" in opposition; the power they held over the Jewish community would thus be broken.

It is these selfsame professionals who, aided and abetted by the Hitlerian era, have arrogantly set themselves up as the conscience of all Jews. It is they who are promoting the new separatism -- Zionism -- and are denouncing Americans for being Americans first. (One cannot help but suspect that these selfsame professionals find anti-semitism favorable to their purposes and, while protesting against this stupidity, secretly hope that it shall grow worse.)

Mr. Berger has done the American Jew an inestimable service by writing this book. He and it (and the courageous publisher) will be treated to a good round of scurrility. But, it will give comfort and solace to those American Jews who are compelled to endure the yoke of dualism. And the many Christians who are perplexed by this phenomenon will find in this book the answer they have been seeking.

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